

Department of Community Services

Business Plan Fiscal Year 2008 - 2009

Building strong, healthy communities together



Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister	3
1.0 Mission/Mandate	4
2.0 Strategic Goals	4
3.0 Link to the Corporate Path	5
4.0 Planning Context	6
4.1 Opportunities	6
4.2 Challenges	7
5.0 Priorities & Performance Measures by Core Business Area	8
5.1 Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA)	9
5.1.1 2008-2009 Priorities	9
5.1.2 Performance Measures	11
5.2 Housing	13
5.2.1 2008-2009 Priorities	13
5.2.2 Performance Measures	15
5.3 Services and Supports for Families and Communities	17
5.3.1 2008-2009 Priorities	17
5.3.2 Performance Measures	20
5.4 Services for Persons with Disabilities	22
5.4.1 2008-2009 Priorities	22
5.4.2 Performance Measures	24
6.0 Human Resource Strategy	26
6.1 2008-2009 Priorities	26
6.2 Performance Measures	27
7.0 Budget Context	28

Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

On behalf of the Department of Community Services, we are pleased to present our business plan for the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

Our plans for the year will build on our vision of economic and social well-being for Nova Scotians.

The government's Social Prosperity Framework will help guide our efforts in developing and delivering sustainable social policy and programming.

In collaboration with the Working Group on Poverty Reduction, the Departments of Community Services and Labour and Workforce Development expect to release a poverty reduction strategy this summer.

We will continue to make progress through our multi-disciplined Strategy for Children and Youth. Along with our partners in the Departments of Health, Justice, Education, and Health Promotion and Protection, we will improve services for children, youth at risk, and vulnerable families.

We look forward to working in partnership with the many stakeholders and organizations who help support Nova Scotians in need.

Judy Streach
Minister, Department of Community Services

Judith F. Ferguson
Deputy Minister, Department of Community Services

1.0 Mission/Mandate

The primary responsibility of the Department of Community Services is to ensure the basic needs of individuals and families are met by protecting children and adults at risk, and by providing financial support to persons in need. Most of the department's expenditures are in the form of direct payments to clients in need of financial assistance or to service providers who provide residential, vocational, child care, housing, protection and other social services on behalf of the department.

Mission

The Department of Community Services is committed to a sustainable social support system that promotes the independence, self-reliance, and security of the people we serve...achieved through excellence in service delivery, leadership, and collaboration with our partners.

2.0 Strategic Goals

The department has six strategic goals to which all core business areas and corporate support services contribute:

- To strengthen the capacity of individuals and families to participate in their communities, achieve their full potential, and assume responsibility for addressing their own needs.
- To build and maintain a well managed, capable, responsive and sustainable social service system.
- To create an integrated, client focused, quality service delivery system.
- To strengthen service provider relationships and leverage opportunities for collaboration.
- To develop and demonstrate leadership in the continuous pursuit of excellence.
- To foster a competent and committed workforce through appreciation and support for individuals and teamwork.

In 2008-2009 the department will be reviewing its strategic goals to ensure they align with and support the direction of the New Nova Scotia and the Social Prosperity Framework.

Securing Nova Scotia's future means making smart investments. Government's *Path to 2020: The New Nova Scotia* lays the foundation for a prosperous Nova Scotia by setting a direction which focuses on:

- *Creating Winning Conditions*
- *Seizing New Economic Opportunities*
- *Building for Individuals, Families and Communities.*

The 2008-2009 priorities contribute to *Building Better Futures for Individuals, Families and Communities*. Under the Social Prosperity Framework, the department is continuing its work on two very important strategies in the areas of poverty reduction, and children and youth.

Corporate Path: Building for Individuals, Families and Communities Government Priority: Safer, Healthier Communities	
Priority	Corporate Path
Employment Support Services Redesign	3.2 Accessible Services 3.4 Vibrant Communities
Labour Market Development Agreement Negotiations	3.2 Accessible Services 3.4 Vibrant Communities
Increasing and Preserving the Supply of Affordable Housing	3.1 Healthy, Active Nova Scotians 3.2 Accessible Services 3.4 Vibrant Communities
Child Welfare Improvements	3.2 Accessible Services
Child Welfare Program Review/Audit	3.2 Accessible Services
More Accessible and Affordable Child Care Options	3.1 Healthy, Active Nova Scotians 3.2 Accessible Services
Services for Persons with Disabilities Strategy	3.2 Accessible Services
Social Prosperity Framework	
Priority	Corporate Path
Poverty Reduction Strategy	3.1 Healthy, Active Nova Scotians 3.2 Accessible Services
Child and Youth Strategy	3.1 Healthy, Active Nova Scotians 3.2 Accessible Services 3.3 Safe Communities

4.0 Planning Context

The social service system is the safety net for Nova Scotians in times of need. There are many factors at play that influence the demand for social services and the government's ability to respond. Many of these factors are beyond the control of the department, yet they affect the performance of the social service system. The most prominent factors are discussed below.

4.1 Opportunities

Growing Economy

Forecasts predict moderate annual economic growth in Nova Scotia in excess of 2.5% for 2008 and 2009.¹ Over the past several years, economic growth has been one of the factors contributing to caseload reductions in the Employment Support and Income Assistance program. The average monthly caseload has been in decline since 2000-2001. Falling from 36,210 cases in 2000-2001 to 29,510 in 2006-2007, a reduction of 19%. This trend continued into 2008.

Declining Unemployment Rate

Over the course of the past decade, unemployment rates across the province have been declining. In 2006, the provincial unemployment rate was 7.6%. The Cape Breton economic region continues to experience the highest unemployment rate; however since 1996, this has declined from 23.1% to 13.1%.²

Changing Labour Market

The province's labour market is facing challenges related to a declining population growth and an aging population. Labour shortages are presenting new employment opportunities to persons who have traditionally found it difficult to obtain employment.

Integrated Labour Market Model

The creation of a new Department of Labour and Workforce Development will bring together staff who are doing complementary work from different government departments. This new department will be responsible for the creation of a labour market strategy that fully integrates and optimizes federal and provincial investments to prepare Nova Scotians for work.

¹TD Economics, *Provincial Economic Outlook*, October 2007.

²Nova Scotia Department of Finance, Economics and Statistics Branch, *Labour Force Data, Historical*, February 2007.

Social Prosperity Framework

The implementation of the Social Prosperity Framework lays the foundation for the province's social policy and programming. It recognizes the importance of integrating social prosperity into all aspects of public policy and not just within a single department. The framework is built on the principle of departments and communities working together to develop and implement social policy. Under this framework, the department is advancing two important strategies in the areas of poverty reduction, and children and youth.

Child and Youth Strategy

Through the Child and Youth Strategy, more emphasis is being placed on early supports and interventions for children and youth in recognition of the evidence that it is more cost efficient and effective than intervention later in life.

4.2 Challenges

Increasing Complexity of Need

The needs of people accessing the department's programs are becoming increasingly complex. This is evident in child welfare programs, programs for persons with disabilities, and clients of the Employment Support and Income Assistance program. The needs of these populations pose a challenge to existing interventions, service systems, policies, and legislation.

Increased Needs in Child Welfare

The increase in complexity of clients served by Child Welfare has resulted in rising numbers of children coming into the care of the Minister. Since 2004, there has been a general increase of children in care of 3.5%. However, the number of children taken into permanent care and custody of the Minister since 2004 is 8.6%. The needs of these children strain child welfare placement services, and leads to rise in children's maintenance expenditures.³

Aging Housing Stock & Infrastructure

Nova Scotia's private and public housing stock is aging, adding to the need for major repairs. In addition, service providers throughout the province are experiencing increasing difficulties keeping pace with maintenance and repairs of aging buildings.

Aging Population

Nova Scotia's population is aging. In 2006, people aged 65 or older represented 15.1% of the

³Refers to a three year period, from 2004-2005 to 2006-2007.

population. This proportion is the second highest in Canada with only Saskatchewan having a higher rate. The Nova Scotia population of seniors is expected to increase by over 80% within the next 20 years.⁴ As it does, the demand for existing and new services and supports will increase; and with an aging population it is likely that the incidence of disability will also increase, putting additional pressures on the social service system.

Low-Income Population

In 2005, 81,000 Nova Scotians, or 8.9% of the population, were living in low income situations (LICO; after tax). This represents the smallest proportion of the population living in low income of the past decade, and is down from 10% in 2004. Encouragingly, the number of children under 18 living in low income families continues to decline, falling from 22,000 in 2004 to 19,000 in 2005.⁵

Department's Aging Workforce

Community Services, like many other departments of government, has an aging workforce. Over two-thirds of the department's employees are over the age of 40; approximately 28% will reach retirement age over the next five years.

5.0 Priorities & Performance Measures by Core Business Area

Core business areas are collections of individual programs whose results and outcomes are fundamental to meeting the department's strategic goals and carrying out its mandate. The department has four core business areas:

- Employment Support and Income Assistance
- Housing
- Services and Supports for Families and Communities
- Services for Persons with Disabilities

Below is a brief description of each core business area, the major initiatives to be completed in 2008-2009 and measures of the department's performance.

It should be noted that the following priorities are in addition to the department's ongoing activities that staff carry out on an annual basis. More information on the department's programs and services can be found on the department's website, <http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/>.

⁴Statistics Canada, Demography Division, *Annual population estimates and projections*, July 1, 2001 to 2031.

⁵Statistics Canada, *Income in Canada 2005*.

5.1 Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA)

The focus of the employment support and income assistance core business area is to provide financial assistance for persons in need and to facilitate their movement towards employment, independence and self-sufficiency.

Supports include:

- financial assistance for basic needs and special needs
- training and employability supports
- prescription drug coverage for income assistance recipients and children of low income families
- employment assistance for persons with disabilities
- children's benefits for low income families.

5.1.1 2008-2009 Priorities

Government is committed to supporting Nova Scotia's families and securing the future for our children. Consistent with this direction, the department will be pursuing a number of initiatives to support those most in need. These initiatives focus on reducing poverty and improving the standard of living of Nova Scotians struggling on low incomes.

Priority: Poverty Reduction Strategy

In 2008-2008, the government will bring forward a provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy. The strategy will be informed by the work of the Poverty Reduction Working Group which is scheduled to table its recommendations in June 2008. The working group is currently exploring programs and supports offered by the Province, best practices in other jurisdictions, as well as the public consultation results.

Priority: Redesign of Employment Support Services.

In 2007, a comprehensive evaluation was conducted on Employment Support Services. A number of changes or enhancements were identified that would better support clients/participants to become more self sufficient. The changing nature of the Income Assistance client profile, the Nova Scotia labour market, along with the pending redesign of federal and provincial employment programs and services, will also influence the redesign.

In 2008-2009, the department will:

- clarify the mandate, purpose, and vision of Employment Support Services by defining the department's expectations regarding employment services within the context of the ESIA program;
- develop a model and an implementation plan that will:

- efficiently and effectively support the consistent, province-wide delivery of high quality employment services within the context of the ESIA program;
- develop specific strategies designed to better support individuals having multiple barriers to employment;
- ensure that Employment Support Services staff are supported in a change management process and are demonstrating the competencies required to operate effectively within a revised model of service delivery.

Priority: Labour Market Development Agreement Negotiations

In 2008-2009, the department will be supporting the new Department of Labour and Workforce Development in the negotiations of the federal labour market agreements and the development of government's new approach to an integrated labor market model.

5.1.2 Performance Measures

The focus of Employment Support and Income Assistance is to provide assistance for those in need, and to enable individuals and families to work towards self-sufficiency. As indicated in the following table, several interrelated performance measures are used to help track progress toward this outcome.

Two measures - average monthly beneficiaries as a percentage of the Nova Scotia population, and the employment support cases with wage income - are indicators of the level of self-sufficiency. Two measures of participation in employment support services provide an indication of the success of the Employment Support Services (ESS) program in addressing the employment-related needs of clients.

Outcome	Measure	Data Base Year (BY)	Target 2008-2009	Target 2010-2011	Strategic Action
Self-reliant people, strong families, and inclusive communities	Average monthly beneficiaries as a % of the NS population	2006-07: 5.1% of the NS population 2005-06 (BY): 5.5%	Decrease to 5%	5% of the NS population	Enhance early detection initiatives such as income verification. Improve access to alternative sources of income such as Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan. Increase number of Income Assistance recipients participating in Employment Support Services.
	% of income assistance recipients participating in Employment Support Services with wage income	2006-07: 30% of participants with wage income 2005-06 (BY): 31%	Increase to 32%	35% of participants with wage income	Review the Harvest Connection Program with the focus of improving its utilization. A review of current wage incentive policies. Provide timely targeted support to specific groups such as Educate to Work and other skills development participants to support their movement to the work force. Create new or enhanced job development tools to better support groups, such as persons with disabilities.

Outcome	Measure	Data Base Year (BY)	Target 2008-2009	Target 2010-2011	Strategic Action
Self-reliant people, strong families, and inclusive communities	% of income assistance recipients participating in Employment Supports Services	2007-08 (BY): 16% participating in Employment Supports Services ⁶	Increase to 20%	33% participation rate	Review intake and assessment procedures. Target high priority income assistance recipients such as those temporarily excused from involvement. Enhance some services to support a broader range of recipients. Expand the capacity of Employment Support Services through the improved utilization of community based and government partners.
	% of youth (16 - 24) receiving income assistance assisted to enhance their employability	2006-07: 34.4% of youth assisted 2005-06 (BY): 30.7%	Increase to 35%	50% of youth assisted	Expand partnerships with agencies that serve youth. Set new targets under the Youth Development Initiative and other funded employment projects. Establish a system of early identification for youth needing access to Employment Support Services. Develop integrated strategies with other programs providing services to youth.

⁶Following the implementation of Integrated Case Management (ICM), the Employment Support Services caseload is more accurately being tracked and calculated resulting in the need for a new base year. 16% is based on 10 months of data.

5.2 Housing

Housing is a basic need, fundamental to personal well being, and the base upon which to build healthy and sustainable communities. A range of housing programs are available to ensure that more households in Nova Scotia have access to safe, appropriate, affordable and sustainable housing. In addition, existing buildings and technical and financial resources are used to support communities. The range of housing programs and services includes:

- provincial loan and mortgage programs
- grants for home repairs
- help for major repairs and adaptations
- rental housing
- property tax rebate program
- other programs such as Co-operative Housing

5.2.1 2008-2009 Priorities

Government is committed to ensuring Nova Scotia's low-income families have access to a range of affordable housing options. In 2008-2009, the department will increase and preserve Nova Scotia's supply of affordable housing.

Priority: Increasing and Preserving the Supply of Affordable Housing

In 2008-2009, the department will continue to implement:

- **Affordable Housing Program - Phase II**
Funding, valued at \$18.9 million, will generate approximately 200 housing units over the life of the Affordable Housing Agreement - Phase II. These funds will be invested in new rental housing, rental housing preservation, and home ownership preservation.
- **Federal Affordable Housing Trust**
The remaining \$14.9 million of the Federal Affordable Housing Trust will be committed in 2008-2009. Funding will be invested in immediate short-term public/social housing pressures, including aging in place initiatives, elevator installation, regeneration of public housing projects at-risk, and the construction of new affordable housing units. By the end of March 2009, the total trust amount, \$23.0 million will be committed.
- **Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust**
Working with Aboriginal organizations and the Provincial Office of Aboriginal Affairs, the department will invest the balance of the \$7.8 million Aboriginal Off-Reserve Housing Trust Fund. Approximately \$6.7 million will be invested to assist Aboriginal households living off-reserve through home ownership, retrofit, rental housing, transition housing and support counseling programs.

5.2.2 Performance Measures

The following measures track the department's performance in the provision of a range of safe, appropriate, affordable and sustainable housing options for Nova Scotians in need.

Outcome	Measure	Data Base Year (BY)	Target 2008-2009	Target 2010-2011	Strategic Action
Self-reliant people, strong families, and inclusive communities	Affordable Housing Agreement funds committed to creating or renovating housing units	2006-07 (BY): 8.5% (\$1.6 M) of Phase II funds were committed; 35 units were created or preserved	Commit all of Phase II funding \$18.9 million; create or preserve 200 units	New measures are under review.	Accelerate implementation of Phase II Affordable Housing Agreement. Work in partnership with community based organizations, municipalities and the private sector to increase or preserve housing units. Commit funds to new rental construction, rental preservation, home ownership preservation, new home ownership and rent supplements.
	Federal Housing Trust Funds committed	2006-07 (BY): 11% (\$2.5M) of the funds were committed	Commit all of the Federal Housing Trust funds \$23 million	New measures are under review.	Invest funding in the modernization and regeneration of the social housing portfolio, and the creation of new affordable housing units. This includes new rental construction for persons in need, as well as aging in place initiatives for public and non-profit housing.
	Off-Reserve Aboriginal Trust funds committed	2006-07 (BY): \$0 funds committed	Commit all of the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Trust funds \$7.8 million	New measures are under review.	Deliver funds through Aboriginal delivery agents and through housing programs developed in consultation with the province and Aboriginal organizations.

Outcome	Measure	Data Base Year (BY)	Target 2008-2009	Target 2010-2011	Strategic Action
Self-reliant people, strong families, and inclusive communities	% of co-operative housing organizations who achieve a ranking of Level I or a High Level II based on an annual assessment of their financial, democratic and physical condition	2006-07: 62% of co-operative housing organizations 2005-06 (BY): 63%	Increase to 68%	75% of co-operative housing organizations	Conduct visits with the co-operatives on a three year cycle to monitor performance. Through an inspection process, assess the level of reserve funding, and ensure plans are in place for capital replacement. Explore early intervention practices. Implement a Head Office default centre focusing on projects that are struggling financially.
	# of households assisted with health and safety related home repairs	2006-07: 2,540 households 2005-06 (BY): 2,429	Increase to 2,850	2,850 households	Expend all available funds. Deliver the Department of Health's funds targeted at repairs/adaptations to homes occupied by seniors to help them to continue to live independently. Participate in Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Renovation Program Evaluation.

5.3 Services and Supports for Families and Communities

The core business area of services and supports for families and communities focuses on the provision of safe and nurturing environments for children and youth to enable them to develop to their full potential. The presence of, and opportunity for, positive, supportive experiences in the early years in the home, the care environment, and the neighbourhood can promote optimal outcomes in a child's development including educational, linguistic, social, emotional, behavioural, and physical domains.

The range of programs and services delivered by this core business area includes:

- adoption and foster care programs
- child protection services
- support for children in care
- secure care
- early childhood development programs
- early learning and child care programs
- prevention services
- youth services and supports.

Through the Child and Youth Strategy, more emphasis is being placed on coordinating programs and services across departments and organizational mandates to contribute collectively to the early identification of problems and issues, and collaborate on the process of joint resolution. Each of the five partnering departments have indicated a commitment to "doing things differently" with the intended purpose of arriving at better outcomes for children, youth and their families...together. In 2008-2009, the department will focus on ensuring our programs and services are linked to the critical work in other government departments.

5.3.1 2008-2009 Priorities

Government is committed to ensuring that our children have a good start in life and that families have access to supports to enable them to grow and develop in safe and nurturing environments. Supports for children and youth at risk, and more accessible and affordable child care options are priorities for 2008-2009.

Priority: Child and Youth Strategy

Government has stated its commitment to building a better Nova Scotia for individuals, families and communities, with a particular focus on ensuring that children and youth are healthy, safe, nurtured and responsible - and given the right opportunities to be the best they can be. The Departments of Community Services, Health, Education, Health Promotion and Protection, and Justice are working together to improve services for children and youth through the development of a comprehensive child and youth strategy which focuses on prevention, early intervention, supports for families and support to youth at risk. Specifically, these departments have committed to partnering and coordinating responsibilities for children and youth, while engaging communities, families and youth

in solution-focused efforts at addressing root causes of complex issues and problems. One of the many examples of this enhanced approach to collaboration is the recently strengthened partnership with the Department of Justice in collective efforts at addressing the issue of family violence.

This strategy is part of the provinces's new social prosperity framework, *Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Fabric*, based on the principles of collaboration, co-ordination and shared responsibility.

In 2008-2009, to ensure there is a strong foundation to support the delivery of the Child and Youth Strategy, the department will:

- establish working relationships between Provincial Child and Youth Social Policy Committee and regional and local working groups.
- create mechanisms for identifying provincial priorities and developing corresponding local and regional initiatives aimed at promoting the strategy outcomes and creating more seamless continuum of services and supports for children, youth and families.
- strengthen the child and youth social policy research capacity. Working with policy research personnel in government and building a strong working relationship with the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation establish evaluation criteria for all pilots and initiatives of the Child and Youth Strategy and establish mechanisms for tracking strategy outcomes.

Priority: Improving Child Welfare Services

The department's vision for child welfare is a single integrated service system, which is accessible and responsive to children and families across the province. In 2006, the department began implementation of a multi-year placement redesign initiative. The focus of this year's priorities will be to streamline and strengthen programing delivered by placement services. In keeping with the department's commitment to excellence in service delivery, the department will also undertake a child protection standards compliance review.

In 2008-2009, the department will:

- introduce new Foster Treatment and Foster Outreach Services
- implement single point of entry for placement in residential and foster treatment programs
- conduct on-site standards compliance reviews of all child welfare agencies and district offices.

Priority: More Accessible, Affordable and Inclusive Child Care Options

Under the Early Learning and Child Care Plan, the Department of Community Services committed to developing the foundation for a licensed child care system that is flexible, equitable and sustainable. This foundation will enhance existing early childhood development programs and services. Under the plan, in 2008-2009, the department will:

- expand income eligibility criteria to allow more low income families to access licensed child care spaces
- increase the number of licensed child care spaces by 500
- improve access to family home day care
- launch recruitment and retention initiatives to help address child care educator shortages
- increase access to inclusive child care options for families of children with special needs.

5.3.2 Performance Measures

The following set of performance measures provide an indication of the number of children placed in a secure stable family environment, and the progress made toward increasing the availability of affordable quality child care options for families.

Outcome	Measure	Data Base Year (BY)	Target 2008-2009	Target 2010-2011	Strategic Action
Self-reliant people, strong families, and inclusive communities	# of children in care placed for adoption	2006-07: 87 children in care placed for adoption 2005-06 (BY): 116 children	100 children ⁷	100 children	Increase the number of families that are approved for adoption. Develop standardized assessment and training for adoptive parents.
	# of full-time spaces in licensed child care centres	2006-07: 10,505 spaces in full time licensed child care centres 2005-06 (BY): 9,859 licensed spaces	10,755 licensed spaces	10,860 licensed spaces	The Expansion Loan program will be offered for the creation of new spaces. Operational funding will be provided to help offset the operational costs of centres. Repair/Renovation Loan program will be offered to allow centres to upgrade/enhance their premises.
	# of subsidized child care spaces	2006-07: 3,045 subsidized child care spaces 2005-06 (BY): 3,030 spaces	Increase the # of 2007-08 spaces by 100	3,580 spaces	Subsidized funding will be made available for another 100 spaces.

⁷This new target reflects the number of children coming into care that are available for adoption.

Outcome	Measure	Data Base Year (BY)	Target 2008-2009	Target 2010-2011	Strategic Action
Self-reliant people, strong families, and inclusive communities	Monthly utilization rate of subsidized child care spaces ⁸	2006-07: 93.71% of subsidized spaces utilized 2005-06 (BY): 90.84% utilization rate	95% utilization rate	95% utilization rate	Continue to monitor portable spaces. Increase income eligibility criteria to allow more families to access the subsidized spaces.
	# family-home daycare spaces ⁹	2006-07 (BY): 150 spaces	Increase the # of base year spaces by 300	500 spaces	Funding will be provided to enable the creation of 16 new agencies. Create 40 agencies over the life of the 10 Year Child Care Plan.
	# of child care centres meeting inclusion criteria	2006-07: 133 centres meeting inclusion criteria 2005-06 (BY): 132 centres	145 centres	150 centres	Review the Supported Child Care program. Explore options to provide increased support for inclusive environments.

⁸Changed from monthly utilization of portable child care spaces

⁹Changed from # of spaces in family-home daycare

5.4 Services for Persons with Disabilities

The department provides for a range of services for children and adults with an intellectual disability, a long-term mental illness, a physical disability, or some combination of the three services. The goal is to provide a range of programs that support people at various stages of their development and independence. Services are purchased on behalf of eligible clients from a network of organizations across the province. Services and programs include:

- information, assessment, and case management
- a range of community-based and facility-based residential options including Independent Living, Direct Family Support, Alternative Family Support, Small Options, Group Homes and Developmental Residences, Residential Care Facilities, Adult Residential and Regional Rehabilitation Centres
- a variety of vocational/day supports providing training and employment opportunities in supportive environments, including workshops and adult service centres.

5.4.1 2007-2008 Priorities

Over the past several years, the department has been engaged in a review of the Services for Persons with Disabilities programs. With additional investment by government, the department has made progressive strides in providing a more responsive, accessible, and sustainable system of supports for Nova Scotians with disabilities. Priorities for 2008-2009 focus on the expansion and improvement of existing programs.

Priority: Services for Persons with Disabilities Strategies

In 2008-2009, the department will:

- increase the capacity of residential options
- increase the capacity of adult day programs
- develop a strategy for the comprehensive review of residential infrastructure
- working with the Department of Health, develop a human resource strategy
- expand the Independent Living Support and Alternative Family Support programs

5.4.2 Performance Measures

Through the Services for Persons with Disabilities Renewal project, the department has undertaken a number of initiatives to enhance the range of residential supports and to make these supports more accessible. Progress in achieving this goal is being measured using the performance measures outlined in the following table.

Outcome	Measure	Data Base Year (BY)	Target 2008-2009	Target 2010-2011	Strategic Action
Self-reliant people, strong families, and inclusive communities	# of adult clients with disabilities receiving support services who remain at home with their families	2006-07: 550 clients with disabilities remaining at home 2005-06 (BY): 453 clients	700 clients	800 clients	Provide information to staff to encourage support to families as the preferred program option. Secure increase in program funding.
	# of clients placed in alternative family support homes	2007-08: 38 clients placed in alternative family support homes 2006-07 (BY): 23 clients	48 clients	60 clients	Secure and implement increased funding. Develop and implement recruitment strategy. Implement a training strategy for families. Examine methods to improve the communication of program information.
	# of independent living support clients	2007-08: 90 independent living support clients 2006-07: 25 clients	95 clients	95 clients	Secure and implement funding. Independent Living Support program will be available in all regions of the Province starting in 2008-2009.

Outcome	Measure	Data Base Year (BY)	Target 2008-2009	Target 2010-2011	Strategic Action
Self-reliant people, strong families, and inclusive communities	# of clients served by adult service centres	2006-07 (BY): 1,771 clients served	1,871 clients	1,921 clients	Increase capacity of centres through increased funding, as funding is made available. Working with the Department of Education, offer two pilot projects for 18-21 year olds. Improve infrastructure and invest in additional staff.

6.0 Human Resource Strategy

The Department of Community Services is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and supportive workplace which will enhance employees' health and job satisfaction, thereby enabling employees to contribute most effectively in their roles to deliver high quality public service.

In support of this commitment, the department has formed a Strategic Cultural/Organizational Wellness Initiatives Committee, chaired by the Deputy Minister. The committee brings together the leads of the following areas encompassing wellness:

- Occupational Health and Safety
- Client Service
- Employee Recognition
- French Language Initiatives
- Healthy Workplace
- Employment Systems Review and Training and Development initiatives which would include the following Human Resource areas: management development, recruitment and selection, succession planning, and diversity.

6.1 2008-2009 Priorities

The following 2008-2009 priorities, focus on advancing and promoting an enhanced culture of wellness and organizational health.

Priority: Succession Management

With an aging workforce, the department is placing an increasing emphasis on staff retention and recruitment strategies, career planning, training, and development planning. In 2008-2009, the Career Planning Program will be rolled out to bargaining unit employees.

Priority: Healthy Workplace Initiative

In 2008-2009, the department plans to: will

- develop a healthy workplace plan which links with the overall goals of the organization; .
- review and enhance the Employee Recognition program;
- offer a training program on resume preparation and interview skills to all staff;
- deliver the Public Service Commission's recruitment and selection training program to managers and supervisors within the department;
- review and enhance the department's Orientation Program; and

- serve as the pilot site for an Employment Systems Review championed by the Public Service Commission.

Priority: Client Services

In keeping with the department's commitment to improve client service delivery, a number of service improvement initiatives will be carried out in an effort to foster an internal culture of client service excellence.

In 2008-2009, the focus will be on the provision of service excellence within the department, between individuals and across programs. The areas of focus include Human Resources and Central Registry.

Priority: French Language Services

The French Language Services initiative supports all sectors within the department in their commitment to the *French Language Act and Regulations*.

In 2008-2009, the department will develop and adopt French language protocols and procedures to ensure a consistent approach to client service delivery.

7.2 Performance Measures

The focus of Human Resources is to foster a competent and committed workforce through appreciation and support for individuals and teamwork. The following performance measures are used to help track progress toward this outcome.

Outcome	Measure	Data Base Year (BY)	Target 2008-2009	Target 2010-2011	Strategic Action
Competent and committed workforce	% of MCP (management) employees who participate in annual performance reviews	2005-06 (BY): 71% of MCP employees participated in a performance review	100% participation	100% participation	All managers receive performance management training.
	% of employees who indicate that they have access to training opportunities	2006: 82% of employees indicated they have access to training opportunities 2005: 72% of employees 2004 (BY): 67% of employees	100% of employees	100% of employees	Regional and provincial training committees. All employees have access to LearnNet. Succession management initiative.
	# of employees who participate in diversity training within 1 st year of employment	2006-07 (BY) : 25% participation within 1 st year of employment	70% participation	80% participation	Extend diversity training to Community Services' employees when it is offered by the Public Service Commission.

8.0 Budget Context

Community Services			
	2007-2008 Estimate	2007-2008 Forecast	2008-2009 Estimate
Program & Service Area	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)
Gross Departmental Expenses:			
Senior Management	1,346	1,275	1,466
Corporate Services Unit	16,369	15,049	15,423
Policy and Information Management	3,618	3,457	4,331
Field Offices	9,744	9,876	11,100
Services for Persons with Disabilities	207,925	208,296	216,848
Family and Children's Services	176,273	174,699	182,148
Housing Services	115,893	109,225	128,884
Housing Authority and Property Operations	7,424	6,677	7,489
Employment Support and Income Assistance	347,902	338,934	344,881
Total Departmental Expenses	886,494	867,488	912,570
TCA Purchase Requirements	2,698	2,198	1,743
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	1,319	1,277	1,373